

Professional Development System Maine

Professional development, as part of an effective system of general supervision, is directly linked to the SPP and to the improvement activities. Maine DOE and Child Development Services State IEU (CDSSIEU) provides a variety of opportunities to impact performance from statewide activities to regional trainings, all with a purpose of developing supports that are accessible to LEAs around the state.

Maine DOE Office of Special Services and CDSSIEU contracts and enters into working relationships with technical assistance and dissemination resources regionally and nationally to provide evidence based practice professional development (EBP PD) to educators and educator leaders, parents and interested parties. Maine requested and received an award (the Enhanced Technical Assistance grant) from the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) to improve indicator B-13 compliance. NSTTAC has also assisted in the dissemination professional development addressing standards aligned IEP development. In addition, funding from Maine DOE to the University of Maine at Orono provides the presence of an institution of higher education by providing TA to the coaches and, at times, to the leader teams.

All contractors providing technical assistance to regional sites in the State are aligned with, and engaged in, the services of national technical assistance centers to provide the most current practice available. All work done by contracted individuals must be consistent with Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) SPP and APR indicators as well as Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER).

- 1) [State Personnel Development Grant \(SPDG\)](#). The federally funded SPDG is designed to assist districts in Maine in reforming and improving their personnel preparation and professional development systems that will result in improved long-term and effective educational results for children with disabilities. The SPDG supports the State in establishing regional leader teams in the areas of autism intervention, IEP development aligned with standards and the least restrictive environment, and effective postsecondary transition planning. The initial work of the grant began in October 2011 and will conclude June 2016. The Maine SPDG consists of five goals, four of which are directly related to students ages 3-20.
 - **Goal 1: increase the percentages of highly qualified special education teachers and related services personnel employed in the state.**

Activities include increasing the qualifications of personnel serving children ages birth to 20 with autism by promoting the use of evidence-based practices work. Maine has continued to embed and integrate LRE evidence-based practices in its professional development to provide for newly certified special educator initiatives. Fifteen (15) LEA teams have received professional development during Stage II EBP PD throughout the 2013-14 school year in the areas of data collection, implementation of evidence-based practices, and measurement of outcomes for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and student access to general education and Maine's Revised Learning Results through the implementation of school-wide LRE practices. Autism Spectrum Disorders is one of the most challenging disabilities for Maine LEAs to provide services inside the regular class 80% or more of the day. The Maine Autism Leader teams establish and implement proactive and positive programming with fidelity for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. To date, seventeen (17) LEAs have completed the first year of training, and are disseminating evidence-

based practices and serve as leaders throughout their region as well as their own LEA. During the 2013-14 school year, an additional fifteen (15) teams received the first year of training while the initial seventeen teams took part in a second year of training in evidence-based practice to serve as coaches/mentors at the regional and local level.

Evidence-based practice professional development (PD) statewide continues to provide 37 district-wide Autism Leader teams with coaching support. Each leader team is comprised of general and special education teachers and administrators to promote access to general education curriculum and programming.

- **Goal 2: increase the percentages of SAUs that improve Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) rates for children, ages three to 20, and the progress of children with disabilities in the general curriculum.**

The Goal 2 Implementation Team, made up of community and education stakeholders, has participated in the development of a LRE Facilitated Discussion and Calculation tool to assist schools in using evidence-based practices (EBP) for LRE decision making at IEP team meetings. LEAs are identified as requiring intensive support based on not meeting the state target (65%) and being 1.5 standard deviations below the Maine LEA average for students in a regular classroom 80% of the time or more, or not meeting the state target (9%) and being 1.5 standard deviations above the Maine LEA average for students in a regular classroom 40% of the time or less.

This process identified sixteen (16) LEAs from 2012 child count data that participated in evidence-based practice professional development (EBP PD) provided during the 2013-14 school year to review and analyze their LRE decision making processes through the usage of the developed LRE tool. All Maine LEAs have since been invited to participate in professional development and the tool will be available for their use. Evidence collected from all LEAs on the effectiveness of the professional development process and the tool itself will be used by the Implementation Team to ascertain the impact on the outcomes for children with disabilities.

Currently, two cohorts (14 SAUs) are targeted for technical assistance for evidence-based practice professional development (PD) to improve their LRE rates with access to general education programming resulting in better outcomes for student performance. Coaching is offered to each of these teams using a logic model and implementation science to institute systemic change in practice.

- **Goal 3: increase educators' knowledge and instructional usage of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics for children with disabilities.**

This goal has a particular focus on general education curriculum. In Maine, academic expectations and "proficiency" definitions for public-school courses, learning experiences, content areas and grade levels are outlined in the Maine Learning Results which include the Guiding Principles, expectations for cross-disciplinary skills and life-long learning, and eight sets of content-area standards, including the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics.

Activities are designed to increase the number of special educators who write and implement IEPs so that they are aligned with the CCSS in English-language arts and mathematics. This is accomplished by providing professional development for special educators and regular educators on the development of IEPs in alignment with CCSS in English-language arts and mathematics, and

accommodations that support students in accessing the general education curriculum in the least restrictive environment.

Currently six districtwide leader teams using a logic model and implementation science are working with coaches to promote supporting all teachers to work with all students. Each team participated in a two day institute designed to bring regular and special educators together to support one another. The usage of data, universal design and inclusive teaching practices were emphasized to promote standards-based instruction for post-secondary planning resulting in effective outcomes for all students.

- **Goal 5: increase the percentages of SAU special education and related services personnel who can develop and implement effective, compliant transition plans and activities within timelines.**

During the 2012-13 school year Maine DOE provided evidence-based professional development activities specifically designed to increase the percentages of LEA special education and related service personnel who can develop and implement effective, compliant transition plans and activities within timelines. In partnership with the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), Maine designed and developed a capacity building evidence based practice professional development plan implemented through the GSS activity of targeted technical assistance and professional development.

After this state-wide training, regional leadership teams were established October, 2013 specific to postsecondary transition to provide technical assistance and support to LEAs within the region. These regions continue to provide technical assistance to the LEAs in the region. Each region has a coach to help them work through the goals they have set up for themselves in readiness for implementation. This coaching is face to face on-site, with electronic ongoing consultation, based on the needs in each region. The coaching model provides technical assistance to the regions so that they may effectively provide both professional development and technical assistance to their LEAs.

At this time the professional development will support LEAs with in-depth, specific postsecondary transition planning, that is going to move the child to a better outcome. In August, 2014 Maine DOE rolled out the new IEP format. This format, developed with stakeholder input, is moving educators in the direction of considering postsecondary transition planning at the beginning of a student's IEP development. In addition, attendance at national conferences confirmed alignment of these new processes with effective practices being used in other states.

More information on the SPDG implementation strategies and activities is available on the SPDG webpage (<http://www.maine.gov/doe/specialed/spdg/index.html>) and annual report (<http://www.maine.gov/doe/specialed/spdg/reports/2011annual.pdf>).

- 2) **Listen & Learn Series**. This biweekly webinar series is intended to offer professional development and technical assistance for special education directors and regional CDS Directors in the field. The Office of Special Services offers a Listen & Learn webinar series that is made available to educators, special education directors, program directors, Child Development Services employees, and community service providers as requested. Through a regular schedule

teachers and other educators can plan to participate. In addition, these webinars are recorded and posted for access at a later date, facilitating the use of these learning opportunities by LEAs in their professional development to their own staff. Topics are identified through participant polls and feedback from the field, and have included post-secondary transition planning, related services, and services for children who are blind or visually impaired, among others.

- 3) [Webinars](#). These webinars are intended for a more specific audience than the Listen & Learn series (e.g. Excess Cost and Maintenance of Effort).